
Prohibit "Safe Spaces" that Deny Freedom of Speech

S.B. 339 Free Speech Policy for University System, introduced by Senator William Ligon, passed the Senate 33-19 on February 26th. It would require the board of regents to develop and adopt a policy to prohibit practices and plans that curtail or restrain the freedom of speech or the press and include penalties for violations. After a year, the board would report annually to the public, governor, and General Assembly on September 1st. The report *must* list any barriers that curtailed or restricted free speech, along with the nature of controversies and difficulties that occurred. The report may include recommended changes to rectify related problems.

ACTION – Support. Call House Judiciary Committee Representatives Willard, Ch., 404 656-5125; Fleming, V-Ch., 656-0152; Kelley, Sec., 657-1803; Beskin, 656-0254; Caldwell, 656-0152; Golick, 656-5943; Hanson, 656-0325; Powell, 656-5103; Rutledge, 656-0254; Welch, 656-5912; Nix 656-5146 (Ex officio). (These are the 9 Republicans on the 16-member committee.)

Illegal Aliens Guilty of U.S. Crimes

S.B. 452 Ensuring Necessary Deportations (END) Act changes Georgia law that now *allows* peace officers to investigate and learn the immigration status of criminal suspects. The word "may," now in Georgia law, would change to "shall," to *require* identification of suspects. In addition, it *requires sentencing courts* to determine the defendant's legal status and *notify* the U.S. Department of Homeland Security of the result. If ICE has put a detainer on the guilty party, local law enforcement must comply with federal law to detain, arrest and transport that individual. In such cases, the Board of Pardons and Paroles has no authority to issue parole.

Opposition forces, including illegal aliens, are calling and emailing representatives to kill this legislation. To counteract those efforts, Georgia citizens must flood the following officials with calls supporting S.B. 452.

ACTION – Support. Call **Governor Deal**, 404 656-1776; **House Speaker Ralston**, 404 656-5020; **House Majority Leader Representative Burns**, 404 656-5052 and **Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee members: Representatives Powell**, Ch., 404 463-3793; Clark, V-Ch., 404 657-1803; Petrea, Sec., 404 657-1803; Collins, 656-0109; Cooke, 656-0188; Frazier 656-0265; Glanton, 657-1803; Gravley, 656-0152; Greene, 656-5105; Hitchens, 656-0152; Holcomb, 656-6372; Jackson, 656-0314; Jasperse, 656-7857; Lumsden, 656-0325; Taylor, 656-0109; and Werkheiser, 656-0298.

Parental Rights, State Legislation

S.B. 437 Parental Consent to Resuscitate, introduced February 15th by Senator Chuck Payne, passed the Senate February 28th. Current law *allows* a parent to consent orally or in writing to an order not to resuscitate a minor child. If S.B. 437 passes, non-resuscitation orders would be followed *only with oral or written consent by the minor's parents*. That would *affirm parental rights* over the upbringing of children, unless there is a valid reason to make an exception.

ACTION – Support. Call **House Juvenile Justice Committee Representatives Ballinger**, Ch., 404 656-5105; Cox, V-Ch., 656-0202; Rakestraw, Sec., 656-0177; Cantrell, 656-0152; Chandler, 656-0258; Coomer, 656-502; Collins, 656-0109; Dickerson, 656-0314; Efstration, 651-7737; Gravley, 656-0152; Holcomb, 656-6372; Howard, 656-6372; Jones, 656-0126; Kendrick, 656-0116; Lott, 656-0178; Oliver, 656-0265; Raffensperger, 656-0254; Sharper, 656-0126; Spencer, 656-0178; Thomas, 656-7859; Welch, 656-5912; and Wilkerson, 656-0116.

Parental Rights, Federal Legislation

S.R. 681 Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, introduced February 1st by Senator Harbin, encourages Congress to pass HJRes. 121, the Parental Rights Amendment, and send it to the states for ratification. If ratified, it would undergird the right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children as protected by the U.S. Constitution and Georgia Constitution. HJRes. 121 was introduced in Congress on November 16, 2017.

The bill notes that parents have a fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education and care of their children and (b) to choose private, religious, or home schools or enroll them in the public school of their choice. (c) Parental rights may not be infringed unless governmental reasons are proven to be of the highest order. (d) Parental rights may not be denied or abridged on account of disability. (e) Such rights *do not include* a parental action or decision to end life.

ACTION – Support. Call U.S. Representative Karen Handel, who is a member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution and Civil Justice that is handling HJRes. 121. Her Roswell office number is 770 998-0049 and her fax number in Roswell is 770- 998-0050 or you may call toll-free 1 877 762-8762 to be connected with her D.C. office. Other members on that committee may be contacted in D.C. toll-free at 1 877 762-8762. Those members are as follows: Subcommittee Chairman Steve King (R-IA); Vice-Chairman Ron DeSantis (R-FL); Trent Franks, (R-AZ); Steve Cohen (D-TN); Jamie Raskin (D-MD); and Jerry Nadler (D-NY).

Keep Faith in Adoption and Foster Care

S.B. 375, Keep Faith in Adoption and Foster Care Act, introduced by Senator Ligon on February 1st, passed the Senate by a party-line vote of 45-19 February 23rd. The 19 negative Democrat votes revealed astonishing denials of the constitutional right to religious freedom in business, plus a breach of their oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution and Georgia Constitution.

S.B. 375 is half through the legislative process and the session ends March 29th. For this bill to pass, it must pass the Judiciary and Rules committees, before it can get a full House vote.

ACTION – SUPPORT. Call House Judiciary Committee Representatives Willard, Ch., 404 656-5125; Fleming, V-Ch., 656-0152; Kelley, Sec, 657-1803; Beskin, 656-0254; Caldwell, 656-0152; Golick, 656-5943; Hanson, 656-0325; Powell, 656-5103; Rutledge, 656-0254; Welch, 656-5912; and Nix, 656-5146.

H. B. 605, Childhood Sexual Abuse

H.B. 605 Hidden Predator Act introduced March 22, 2017 by Representative Jason Spencer would strengthen Georgia’s hidden predator law. Previously deemed one of the weakest in the country, that law has been strengthened, incrementally, over the years. H.B. 605 passed the House 170-0 on February 28th and went to the Senate. Representative Spencer explained that H.B. 605 would require a change in policy in order “to deliver moral and righteous act of injustice because child sexual abuse is the murdering of a child’s soul.”

ACTION – Support. Call Judiciary Committee Senators Stone, Ch., 404 463-1314; Cowsert, V-Ch., 463-1366; Tillery, Sec., 656-0089; Jones, 463-3942; Kennedy, 656-0045; Kirk, 463-5258; Ligon, 463-1383; McKoon, 463-3931; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; and Thompson, 463-1318.

Records of Involuntary Hospitalization

H.B. 999 Weapons Carry and Inpatient Hospitalization, introduced by Representative Christian Coomer February 22nd, repeals a law requiring a person’s involuntary hospitalization records to be purged after five years, possibly, in response to the Florida school mass murders.

ACTION – Support. Call Judiciary Committee Senators Stone, Ch., 404 463-1314; Cowsert, V-Ch., 463-1366; Tillery, Sec., 656-0089; Jones, 463-3942; Kennedy, 656-0045; Kirk, 463-5258; Ligon, 463-1383; McKoon, 463-3931; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; and Thompson, 463-1318.

Distracted Driving

H.B. 673 Prohibit Actions that Distract a Driver introduced by Representative John Carson January 11th provides for the proper and safe use of wireless communications while driving and increases the penalty for doing so by increasing the number of points assessed for each offense. *First*, it prohibits using a wireless telecommunications device while operating a school bus. *Then*, it applies to everyone who operates a motor vehicle, by stating that no individual shall physically hold or support, with any part of his or her body, a wireless telecommunications device or stand-alone electronic device. Examples of other restrictions: The driver cannot use such device for navigation or for global positioning or reach for a wireless telecommunications device if the driver cannot remain in a seated position properly restrained by a seatbelt. Violations will be charged as separate misdemeanors with a \$300.00 fine for each offense. It passed the House 151-20 on February 28th and went to the Senate.

ACTION – Support. Call Judiciary Committee Senators Stone, Ch., 404 463-1314; Cowsert, V-Ch., 463-1366; Tillery, Sec., 656-0089; Jones, 463-3942; Kennedy, 656-0045; Kirk, 463-5258; Ligon, 463-1383; McKoon, 463-3931; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; and Thompson, 463-1318.

Drop-Off for Newborns

H.B. 513 Signs: Newborn May be Left Here is the subject of a bill by Representative Pam Dickerson. Introduced February 28, 2017, it was carried into this session and passed the House 171-0 on February 28, 2018. H.B. 513 requires the Georgia Department of Community Health to develop standards for a sign to be posted at any medical facility to inform the general public that such facility is an authorized drop-off location for a newborn child. The Department will regulate the size and type of the signs and their location within or outside the facility.

ACTION – Support. Call Health and Human Services Committee Senators Unterman, Ch., 404 463-1368; Burke, V-Ch., 656-0040; Millar, Sec., 463-2260; Butler, 656-0075; Cowsert, 463-1366; Henson, 656-0085; Hufstetler, 656-0034; Jackson, 463-5261; Kirk, 463-5258; Kirkpatrick, 656-3032; Ligon, 463-1383; Orrock, 463-8054; Shafer, 656-0048; Walker, 656-7454; and Watson, 656-7880.

School Safety

S.B. 457 School Safety Plans was introduced by Senator Horacena Tate on February 21st and passed the Senate 48-2 seven days later, on February 28th. It would add a sentence to current school safety law to require all public and private schools to conduct regular safety drills with students, teachers, and other school personnel under guidance of the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

ACTION – Support. Call Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee Representatives Powell, Ch., 404 463-3793; Clark, V-Ch., 404 657-1803; Petrea, Sec., 404 657-1803; Collins, 656-0109; Cooke, 656-0188; Frazier 656-0265; Glanton, 657-1803; Gravley, 656-0152; Greene, 656-5105; Hitchens, 656-0152; Holcomb, 656-6372; Jackson, 656-0314; Jasperse, 656-7857; Lumsden, 656-0325; Taylor, 656-0109; and Werkheiser, 656-0298.

Signed into Law: State Income Tax Reduction

H.B. 918 Revenue and Taxation, Internal Revenue Code is the tax reform bill that caused such a stir about jet fuel for airlines. It was introduced February 13th by Representative Efstrotation to include the 2017 and 2018 Internal Revenue Code updates and provide Georgians a one-quarter-of-one-percent state income tax reduction, effective January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2015. The jet fuel perk for all airlines using Hartsfield/Jackson Airport was repealed. However, before signing the bill, the governor said the fuel perk would be restored.

ACTION – No further action is required. H.B. 918 passed the House 134-36 on February 2nd. After deleting the jet fuel provision, the Senate passed it 44-10 March 1st. The House voted 135-24 March 1st to adopt the Senate version and sent the bill to the governor for his signature the same day. The governor signed it on March 2nd.

Another Session, Another Critical Disappointment ... Again

Two years ago I asked this question, “Would you rather be judged by laws passed in the United States or by laws used in foreign countries?” Actually, I began asking that question in 2012 after the Georgia General Assembly killed a bill that would have prohibited the use of foreign law in Georgia courts.

By 2011 almost 20 states, including Georgia, had introduced legislation that banned the use of foreign law in their judicial systems and, by June of that year, fifty court cases that had been decided on foreign law were under appeal. If you ask, “What’s the problem?” The answer is very simple.

Foreign laws may be appropriate in their country of origin, but they have not been passed in the U.S., which is a representative republic. Foreign laws often contradict equal protection/due process principles of the U.S. Constitution by, specifically, discriminating against women and children. Discrimination may be accepted in other countries, but it becomes a major legal problem when applied in divorce cases between a non-citizen spouse who expects a decision under foreign law, and the spouse who is a U.S. citizen entitled to be judged by U.S. law.

A January 2015 report revealed that 27 of 146 questionable court decisions from 32 U.S. states, actually, complied with foreign law. Two of those 146 cases were tried in Georgia courts.

By January 1, 2017, eleven states had banned the use of foreign law in their courts and ten additional states did so in 2017. But for almost a decade, Georgia legislators have refused to pass legislation that requires only Georgia law and federal law to be used in Georgia courts.

The Georgia bill introduced in 2011 would have accomplished two things: It prohibited the use of foreign law in Georgia courts, but allowed trial venues to be moved into local counties. That bill died in committee.

In 2015 Georgia Representative Hightower introduced H.B. 171, but the House Judiciary Committee deleted all references to foreign law. Committee members, actually, cut the bill in half, leaving only a section allowing trial venues to be moved into local counties. Thankfully, the gutted H.B. 171 died in committee at the end of the 2016 session.

When foreign law influences judicial outcomes, women are often denied their constitutional rights, although our elected officials have authority to outlaw the use of foreign law in Georgia courts. Incredibly, Georgia legislators who take an oath to uphold the *Constitution of the United States* and the *Constitution of the State of Georgia* seem determined to violate that oath by doing nothing to prevent the use of foreign law in the Georgia judicial system.

March 29th is the last day of the session and, sadly, the legislature has repeated their past failures by doing nothing to prohibit foreign law in Georgia courts. They didn’t introduce such a bill in 2016 or 2017, but if the right legislators are elected, they could pass one in 2019.

ACTION – Make this an issue in the upcoming primaries and General Election. It’s unreasonable to vote for candidates who will not honor their oath of office, have no compunction against defying the Constitutions of the U.S. and Georgia, and will incorporate foreign law into this representative republic that sifts bills through committee after committee of elected officials before they pass and U.S. citizens are subjected to them.

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